



The early agricultural economy of the Middle Pecos had periods of prosperity mixed with years of disaster. Ranching was often in an alternative cycle, and the area's cattle and sheep industries successfully carried the town of Eddy/Carlsbad through several hard years. This stock pen and loading facility, photographed in 1903, were set beside the railroad at the south edge of town. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



While most of the irrigation farmers who came into the Pecos Valley set up operations on smaller acreage, a few large farms did appear. These pigs and cattle are grazing in 1895 on alfalfa at the Tansill Farm, which began its existence with a fine home and a large array of outbuildings. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



Since the 1890s, the valley's American hunters have frequently traveled to the Guadalupe in pursuit of wild game. These men are skinning a brown bear beside a log cabin in the heights around Big Dog Canyon around 1903. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



In the High Guadalupe there is a fairly limited area of pine forest, and the earliest ranchers were able to build log cabins. This was the Ned Shattuck place in Upper Dark Canyon in 1932, one of the last log buildings to remain in use. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



In early 1891 the railroad came north to Eddy, and three years later it was continued north to Roswell. This group of men was photographed with the first train to reach the outskirts of Roswell. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



For many years after the railroad came to Eddy, no additional railroad system penetrated the ranching region that ran almost one hundred miles east from the Pecos River to the Texas state line. Eddy/Carlsbad was the railroad terminus for a vast section of that area of the llano estacado, and provided mail and economic service. This fully loaded mail car, above, was preparing to make its twice-weekly trip to the small communities of the eastern sandhills in 1918.



Jim White was fully involved in the mythology of Carlsbad Caverns. In this 1926 photograph, he poses with the bucket used to haul guano miners and later tourists down into the bat cave.



Taken inside the Bat Cave in 1924, this photograph shows several tourists or scientists descending by means of the bucket to the guano operation. From there they were led by Jim White into the more decorated parts of the cave. At the end of their tour they ascended via the bucket. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



The town of Carlsbad adjusted to the tourist industry as the caverns became established as a major attraction. The town's La Caverna Hotel was built in 1928 and for a time provided most of the accommodations for the upscale tourist trade. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



Sixteen mule teams were still pulling supply wagons between the Pecos Valley's railroad and the surrounding ranching communities to the east during World War I, as this team is doing in 1917. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



One of the isolated ranching operations in the Guadalupe Mountains was the Frijole ranch, run by a host of owners of the years. The ranch house, above, was used as a residence by the National Park Service after the national park was established. (Courtesy Guadalupe Mountains National Park)



Miners worked several small-scale guano operations in the minor caves of the Guadalupes beginning in the 1890s. Soon after the turn of the century, the largest of these operations was the Bat Cave, today's Carlsbad Caverns. This photograph shows the above-ground facilities at the Bat Cave that existed in 1924. The A-frame hoist and bucket are at right. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



One of the popular stops during tours of Carlsbad Caverns was the lunchroom, 750 feet below the surface, as evidenced by the lines above. The caverns targeted the country's middle and upper class travelers, with special trains and limousines used for transportation. The elegantly dressed travelers contrast with the rustic cavern tour guides. (Courtesy Carlsbad Caverns National Park)



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Willis Lee examines one of the caverns natural formations during the expedition sponsored by the National Geographic Society. (Courtesy Carlsbad Caverns National Park)



Illinois Producer No. 1 was the first successful oil well in the middle Pecos valley. The photograph is somewhat misleading in that the geological conditions underlying the valley do not produce natural gushers. The people surrounding the well had been invited to witness the detonation of a nitroglycerine charge at the bottom of the recently completed well which, it was hoped, would increase the wells flow. This “gusher” was a very brief side-effect of that explosion that the photographer was fast enough to catch. (Courtesy Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



Oil and natural gas have been lucrative industries in the Trans-Pecos since the early years of the twentieth century. A typical oil rig, Pratt No. 1, operated by Humble Oil Company, was operating in McKittrick Canyon in this 1967 photograph. (Courtesy Guadalupe Mountains National Park)



During World War II Carlsbad Army Air Field sprang into existence southwest of town as a training facility for navigators and bombardiers. When the war ended, the base disappeared almost as quickly as it had appeared. This aerial photograph was taken shortly after the base closed in 1945. (Courtesy Southwestern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



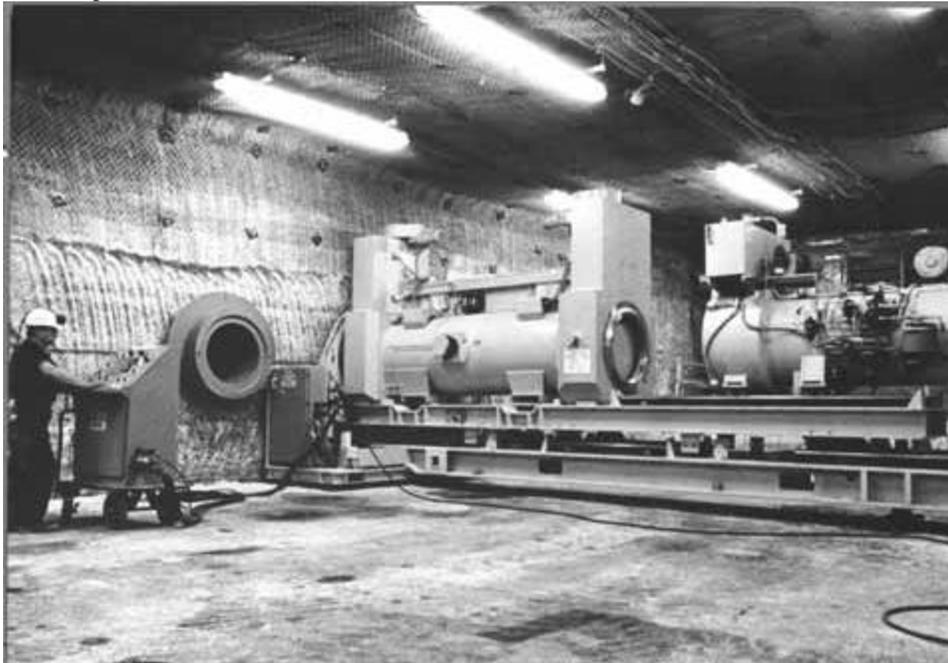
Major potash deposits were discovered in the desert east of Carlsbad in the 1920s. Mining began early in the following decade, and by 1960 there were six major mines employing several thousand workers. This aerial photograph of the Potash Company of America plant was taken in 1948. (Courtesy Southwestern New Mexico Historical Society of Carlsbad)



Wallace Pratt donated his McKittrick Canyon properties as one of the foundations of Guadalupe Mountains National Park. (Courtesy Guadalupe Mountains National Park)



One of the most serious controversies facing the park involved the Pine Spring Café, shown above in 1968. (Courtesy Guadalupe Mountains National Park)



The major employer in the Carlsbad area at the end of the twentieth century is WIPP – the Waste Isolation Pilot Project for storage of low – level nuclear waste. The facility includes a vast network of corridors carved into thick salt beds one and a half mile below the desert floor. This machine inserts cylinders of waste into storage tubes drilled into the salt. (Courtesy WIPP)



Thomas Boles, the first superintendent of Carlsbad Caverns, returned to the area in September 1972 for the dedication ceremonies for Guadalupe Mountains National Park. (Courtesy U.S. Army, photograph from Guadalupe Mountains National Park Archives)